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Civic Engagement on Social Media: 2018 West Java Gubernatorial Election in Indonesia

Idham Tamim Aldary & Umami Salamah

Abstrak/Abstract

Strategi hypermedia dalam kontestasi politik digunakan untuk mempromosikan program-program pengetahuan politik baik oleh kandidat maupun partai kepada masyarakat untuk mempertahankan hak dan kewajiban kewarganegaraan. Pengetahuan politik seseorang dapat meningkatkan tingkat partisipasi politik mereka, yang diperlukan untuk menilai kualitas kandidat. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat kesadaran dan keterlibatan kandidat politik dengan pemilih. Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi politik kandidat dalam membangun pesan kampanye, menarik pemilih yang ditargetkan, dan merangsang partisipasi politik komunitas melalui platform Instagram. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menganalisis 80.328 posting media sosial. Penelitian menemukan bahwa tidak semua kandidat menyadari manfaat dari melibatkan pemilih yang ditargetkan di akun Instagram.

The hypermedia strategy in political contest is used to promote the programs of political knowledge by both candidates and parties to the society in order to maintain the citizenship rights and obligations. It is argued that one's basic political knowledge can increase their level of political participation, which is necessary to assess candidates' quality. The purpose of this study is to look at political candidates' awareness and engagement with the voters. The research focuses on the candidate's political strategy in constructing campaign message, attracting targeted voters, and stimulating the political participation of the community through Instagram platform. This research was conducted by analyzing 80,328 social media posts. The research finds that not all candidates were aware of the benefits of engaging targeted voters on Instagram account.

Kata kunci/Keywords:

Keterlibatan warga, pengetahuan politik, media sosial, penggalian data, Instagram

Civic Engagement, political knowledge, social media, data mining, Instagram.

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Introduction

Indonesia is a developing country that just experienced the development and benefits of technology. The number of registered mobile phone users in Indonesia are 371.4 million users, or 142% of its total population of 262 million people (Katadata.co.id, 2017). In addition, infrastructures, namely telecommunication network and Base Transceiver Station (BTS), are targeted to be built up to 5,000 units in 2018 in remote areas (Haryanto, 2018). This proves that Indonesia is potentially ready to develop hypermedia strategy to campaign on candidates' and parties' political aptitude in order to maintain the citizenship rights and obligations. Since basic political knowledge can increase the level of political participation (Fisher, 2008; Wells, 2009), increasing public awareness of politics can assist the public to assess the candidates' quality.

Political knowledge is an understanding of factual political information that is stored in long-term storage memory (Delli Carpini, 1996). Political knowledge can be perceived as legiti-

mate if delivered directly by opinion leaders such as political figures or candidates. Consequently, politicians' perception on public opinion is often limited to those with political knowledge at the expense of the less informed (van Heerde-Hudson, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to look at political candidate's awareness and engagement with the voters. During the campaign period of political contestation, social media users will use the digital platform to learn about and interact with political candidates, but they tend to gain new knowledge only from the candidates that they like (Boulianne, 2015).

Public perception is the product of available information, and the internet is one of the most important sources of information for citizens (Gainous, 2016). This indicates the beginning of the fourth era of politics in the developed world. Technological advances, the emergence of the internet, and political consciousness are thought to be the factors that change the world's political map. We are beginning to see in various parts of the world how the economic, financial, and security sectors start to employ new technology.

There are three major aspects of the fourth political era, namely electronic targeting, interactive communication, and decentralized organizational control (Ward, Gibson & Lusoli, 2008; Lilleker & Vedel, 2013). Indonesia, one of the largest countries in the world, does not have high political awareness despite its large population. The participation level of Indonesians in politics is still low. For instance, based on data from Indonesia's General Elections Commission (KPU), the percentage of citizens who participated in the 2014 election was only 69.58 percent. Meanwhile, based on a study conducted by Nurhasim (2014), only 75.11% of citizens participated in the 2014 legislative election and 71.17% of citizens participated in the 2009 presidential election.

The potentials for positive and wide-ranging democracy in social media has been widely discussed, but on the other hand, there are also potential for the spread of propagandas in social media (Howard 2016). In 2018, Indonesia will hold simultaneous elections in several regions, specifically in 17 provinces, 115 districts, and 39 cities (Kemendagri, 2018). This moment should be used as the time where the fourth political era blossoms, where new technologies and political strategies are intermingled, especially considering the lessons learned from the 2014 presidential election.

The fourth era of politics is characterized by three features, namely the emergence of big data, the change of direction of information medium to social media, and globalization that unites the world in one vast cultural container and equity of technology (Levitsky & Way, 2010). According to Viner (2016), social media can strengthen the society in overall and enable many different opinions and ideas to be heard. Combining big data and politics may help political candidates to iden-

tify potential supporters and win their votes with unprecedented accuracy. At the same time, it also gives them an absolute freedom to construct and deliver campaign messages in today's post-truth world. Things like computational propaganda, bots, trolls, and information bubble have emerged in the political realm of the current 4.0 era (Howard, 2016). This phenomenon becomes a powerful weapon in today's democracy (Woolley & Howard, 2017).

The term 'big data' refers to large data sets in volumes (tera and byte-maps), speed (made in real time), and variations, which aims to be complete in scope but flexible enough to offer insights about certain populations and/or relationships smoothly (Kitchin, 2013). Previous cases of big data analytics have sparked an alert among people, particularly following a statement from whistle-blower named Christopher Wylie alleging that private information of 50 million users of Facebook was used for the President of the United States Donald Trump's campaign materials and Brexit supporting campaigns (Guardian.com, 2018). Following this scandal, voting schemes using music as a means of demographic and psychographic mapping start to emerge as the public is increasingly aware about the bad side of big data analytics.

According to research firm Gartner (2014), big data analytics reached its peak in 2013. Big data analytics becomes attractive as it offers demographic and psychographic analysis to observe and segment potential voters, which consequently enable candidates to construct and deliver campaign messages accordingly, by using advanced technology. This is in line with the phenomena of slacktivism or clicktivism.

Using social media as one of campaign tools can increase public knowledge and participation in politics, yet social media campaign can also enable candidates to formulate and deliver appealing campaign messages to win votes and preventing supporters from switching sides to other candidate. In addition, using new technology, such as social media, can reduce the expense of political campaign and increase its efficiency as well (Gibson, 2003). Such strategy, thus, should be considered by political candidates in Indonesia in running their campaign across the country's vast region in such a short campaign period. Using social media is an efficient means with less expense and logistics costs but effective in constructing and delivering campaign message. For example, the success of the Five Star Movement in Italy has been attributed, in part, to the movement's online organization (Mosca, 2015), while in Britain, the emergence of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader of Labor Party has also been partially attributed to the use of social media in increasing the party's membership base (Bale, 2016).

In regard to political parties, they are not always affected or threatened by new technology such as the internet. Nevertheless, a number of major political parties have undoubtedly been

challenged by demands for more direct methods of participation (Margetts, 2015). Following this, is political contestation in Indonesia able to create opportunities for new parties and innovations in the current fourth political century? Looking at demographic data of Indonesia's population, especially in West Java, which is one of the most politically important regions in Indonesia where parties' success in winning supports is often tested (Saputra, 2017).

West Java is one of the largest provinces in Indonesia with a population of 33 million people, almost 20% of the country's overall voters. The number is predicted to increase to 37 million to 38 million between 2018 and 2019 (Saputra, 2017). Its location, which is near the capital city Jakarta, makes West Java as a lucrative source of votes for parties and candidates in political contestations. It is, thus, for parties and candidates to employ political strategies using new technology in the region. In addition to its cost efficiency and effectiveness in delivering campaign messages, the political strategy of using new technology also enables candidates and parties to collect data of swing voters, based on which data-based approaches to mobilize voters can be formulated.

In mixing their campaign with technology, candidates can also employ social media tools such as blogs or social networking sites to outsource campaign tasks (Vaccari, 2010; Norquay, 2008; Bimber, 2014). Thus, it is not surprising that the use of social media has become fundamental in amassing information on potential voters and fostering engagement between candidates and voters (Bode, 2016; Boulianne, 2015).

The anatomy of social media enables the technological invention structures to share on demand information via the internet and other interactive devices, which provide opportunities for creative rewards and participation (Castells, 2009). In politics, in sharing information, reciprocity is required, especially if the information comes from the candidate directly, to amplify or neutralize information positive or negative information circulated among voters. In the case of negative information, as once circulated misinformation is difficult to neutralize, the process of neutralization greatly depends on the candidates' level of ideological commitment. It is easier to neutralize misinformation circulated among voters who are not a strong partisan (Kuklinski, 2000).

The internet provides many platforms for people to interact, but people often tend to resort to popular platforms only, one of which is Instagram, one of the fastest growing social networking platforms today (Wagner, 2015). Instagram is basically an online mobile photo-sharing platform, video footage and Social Network Service (SNS) that allows users to take pictures and videos and share them with other platforms (Frommer, 2010). Instagram, in addition to being used for maintaining relationships, is also used for promoting narcissism (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016).

This is because Instagram works well in the context of shallow information and highly-controlled environments, where Instagram's users have the complete power to present themselves (Buffardi & Campbell, 2008).

According to a research conducted by Marcus (2015), compared to other similar social networking platforms, Instagram is generally used as to create personal rather than relational identity (Marcus, 2015). Based on his observation of five Instagram's users aged between 22 to 25 years old, Marcus concludes that Instagram is useful for people to promote themselves. Unlike Facebook, Instagram does not focus on social relationships as much. In addition, unlike other social media platforms, Instagram tends to be more personalized as it exclusively posts personal photos (Highfield, 2015).

Literature Review

There are many methods and media platforms that can be used to create and promote one's personal image to the public. However, the chosen method and platform should be in accordance with the current technological development in the society. The emergence of technological innovations creates new ways which can be adopted into people's way of life, including their political life. It is important to remember that political candidates' ultimate objective is to increase their electability during the relatively short campaign period without bearing too enormous expense. Fortunately, Indonesia has already been exposed to the benefits of technological development, with some of the benefits can be utilized in politics.

One way to increase public political participation is to raise awareness of the importance of politics by enhancing people's political knowledge and aptitude. Regardless, this is often proven difficult as the public often perceive information on politics as boring and tedious. In addressing this problem, many politicians, in order to capture people's attention and support, often use various methods, one of which is by using identity politics such as ethnic, religious, or racial issues. By using this method, politicians attempt to create a sense of commonality among potential voters, hoping that the commonality will be adequate to unite and mobilize the potential voters to support the politicians (Liang, 2015). Such method is illustrated in a study conducted by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and other scholars from Columbia University (cited in Pooley, 2006), who argued that in using identity politics, politicians often raises three types of social issues, namely social class, race or religion, and origin (urban versus rural).

Lazarsfeld and Berelson's method may easily spark division in the society, especially in countries with numerous and diverse cultures such as Indonesia. To avoid such consequence, political maturity, technological growth, and even distribution across the country is requisite. This is where technological innovations bear a 'gift' for

countries as the innovations enable and facilitate the creation of modern and democratic politics.

In addition, it is predicted that Indonesia will experience a period of demographic bonus between 2030 and 2040, where the number of the country's productive population (aged between 15 to 64 years old) will be larger than the number of the unproductive population (aged under 15 years old and above 64 years old). In that period, the productive population is predicted to reach 64% of the total population, which is projected to be 297 million people (Afandi, 2017). The large number of productive population is expected to bring about positive changes in Indonesian politics.

As previously mentioned, increasing voters' political knowledge will consequently increase public participation in politics. In extending voters' political knowledge, it should be noted that voters more easily retain and accept new knowledge if it is directly delivered directly by candidates. Previous research found that politics is deeply social in nature; it requires relationships and conversation in order to exist (Clark, 2017). In conducting political campaigns, there are candidates who deliberately avoid two-way communication with their voters for the fear of facing difficult situations which require them to answer difficult questions. Regardless, in the current age, candidates' engagement with potential voters can be conducted without requiring the candidates to directly meet the voters. With the use of social media, not only candidates can actively engage with voters, voters can also perceive the candidates' social media engagement as more personal compared to the usual formal setting of political campaigns. Such perception may be caused by the fact that social media platforms such as Instagram allow candidates to regularly update voters with new information on not only political matters, but also the mundane and ordinary part of the candidates' life, bridging the distance between voters and candidates. This not only increases the candidates' engagement with the public, but also assists the candidates to circulate information in unique forms to the public.

Candidates' Instagram Profiles

Four candidates and their running mates competed in 2018 West Java Gubernatorial election back in June, 2018. The governor and deputy governor candidates were Ridwan Kamil (Mayor of Bandung) - Uu Ruzhanul Ulum (Regent of Tasikmalaya), TB Hasanudin (Member of House of Representatives) - Anton Charliyan (Head of West Java Regional Police), Sudrajat (Politician) - Ahmad Syaikh (Vice Mayor of Bekasi), and Deddy Mizwar (Deputy Governor of West Java) - Dedi Mulyadi (Regent of Purwakarta).

The following is the Instagram profiles of the candidates who competed in the 2018 West Java Gubernatorial election. These images are taken from each candidate's official Instagram account.

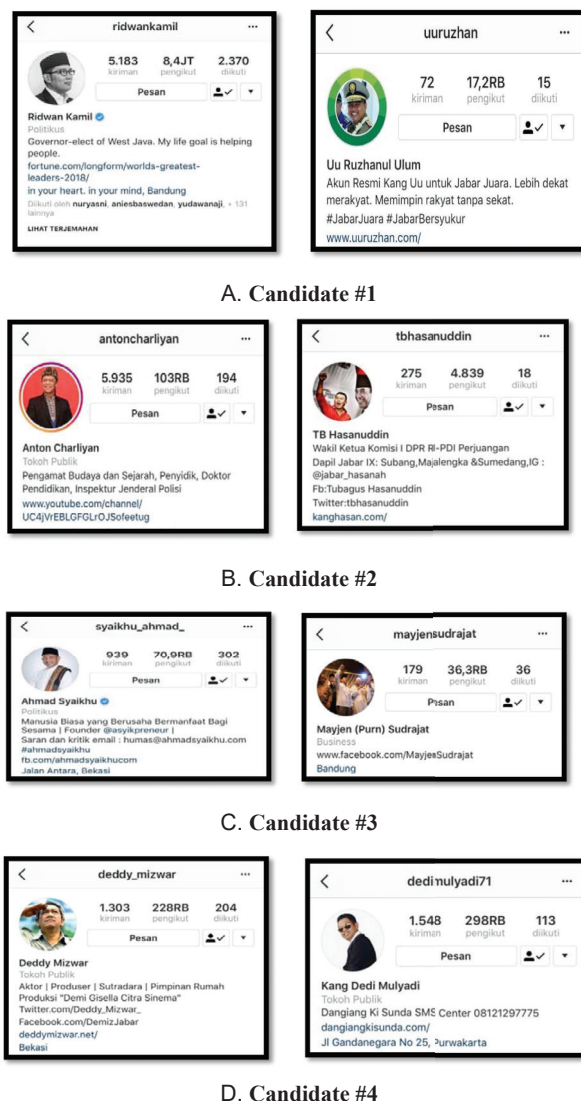


Figure 1. Pictures of Each Candidate's Instagram Account

The images of the candidates' Instagram accounts show a number of information on the candidates, such as the number of posts that the candidates have uploaded, the number of the candidates' followers, the number of people followed by the candidates, and a brief description of the candidates. Based on the images above, with approximately 8.4 million followers, candidate number one's, Ridwan Kamil, Instagram account has the most followers compared to other candidates, followed by Dedi Mulyadi (298 thousand), Dedy Mizwar (228 thousand), Anton Charliyan (103 thousand), Ahmad Syaikh (70.9 thousand), Sudrajat (36.3 thousand), Uu Ruzhanul Ulum (17.2 thousand), and finally TB Hasanudin (4,839).

In regard to candidates' activeness on social media, based on the number of posts uploaded by each candidate, Anton Charliyan takes the lead with the number of posts reaching 5,935 posts, followed by Ridwan Kamil (5,183 posts), Dedi Mulyadi (1,548 posts), Deddy Mizwar (1,303

posts), Ahmad Syaikh (939 posts), TB Hasanudin (275 posts), Sudrajat (179 posts), and Uu Ruzhanul Ulum (72 posts).

In terms of description, candidates use this section to briefly introduce themselves to fellow Instagram users. For example, Ridwan Kamil's account simply describes Ridwan with his life objective, stating that his life's goal is to help other people. A similar approach is also taken by candidate Ahmad Syaikh, who describes himself as an 'ordinary man who is trying to be useful to others'. Ahmad also mentions his position as the founder of an entrepreneurial organization. Other less popular candidates' puts more information to describe themselves. For instance, Anton Charliyan (Candidate number two) describes himself by stating his occupation, achievements, level of education, and interests. Through this description, voters can get information about Anton's backgrounds, starting from his interest in culture and history, his career in law enforcement, to his doctoral degree. The same approach is also employed by candidate Deddy Mizwar, who mentions his occupations as an actor, producer, director, and head of a production company, in describing himself. Finally, candidate Sudrajat is the only candidate who does not put anything in his description box other than a website link to his Facebook page.

As previously mentioned, Indonesia has the potential to implement hypermedia strategy in political campaign activities. As one of the most politically significant regions in Indonesia, West Java is a suitable region in which a research on the use of hypermedia strategy in constructing campaign messages and increasing candidates' engagement with voters can be conducted. The growth rate of internet users in Java Island reached 58.08%, while internet penetration stands at 57.70% (Setiawan, 2018). Prior research also indicates that internet users have spread into villages in West Java as the access to social media also increases (Sari, 2017).

It is interesting to see how the candidates took advantage of the demographic and psychographic of West Java population to boosting their electability. This research will discuss how the candidates employed the hypermedia strategy through their Instagram accounts, particularly on how they construct campaign messages and increase their engagement with voters through every post uploaded on their Instagram account since the beginning of the campaign period until the second round of public debates between the candidates. The time period is specifically chosen to depict how candidates' engagement with the public changed during the campaign period. This condition was chosen with the consideration that the campaign period is still ongoing and West Java has not presented anyone as the winner so that now all candidates have the same opportunities for each other in the dispute of one seat of Governor and Vice Governor of West Java. Ulti-

mately, this research attempts to present an overview of the candidates' awareness of using social media platforms and how it facilitates them disseminate information in order to increase their engagement with voters and also to boost public participation in politics.

Data Collection, Method, and Analysis

This study will be based on data gathered from each candidate's Instagram account. Regardless, there are some limitations in this research, namely the period of study. The first round and second round of public debates occurred on January 9 and on May 15, 2018. The registration period. The first public debate and the second public debate. Another limitation is caused by the fact that Instagram Application Program Interface (API), an application which the researchers used to collect data for the research, changed its policy in 2017, making it difficult to collect data in a long period of time.

During the period of candidate registration (9-11 January 2018), the first public debate (11-13 March, 2018), and the second public debate (13-15 May 2018), a total of 80,328 post were collected, specifically 102 posts uploaded on candidates' accounts, one comment from a candidate on his own post, 71,561 comments from the public posted on the candidates' accounts, 78 replies from candidates to public comments, and 8586 public replies to candidates' comments. This was to compare the candidates' engagement with public on the candidates' Instagram accounts. After analyzing the engagement, further analysis on how frequent the public responds to the candidates' posts on their Instagram accounts was also conducted.

The researchers used a research method employed in the journal article published by Howard *et.al* (2016) entitled "Social Media, Civic Engagement, And the Slacktivism Hypothesis: Lesson from Mexico's "El Bronco" to measure the candidates' engagement with voters on the candidates' Instagram accounts. Instagram was chosen in particular because it is one of the most popular social media platforms following Facebook. Furthermore, Instagram was chosen as the platform is often used by its users to create public perception and conduct self-promotion (Marcus, 2015). Lastly, Instagram was also chosen in particular as it enables candidates to forge personal connection with potential supporters as Instagram is designed for its users to upload personal photos or images.

However, because at the time of writing the campaign period is still ongoing and the winner of the election has yet to be decided, the research will only be based on data collected from Instagram posts, comments from candidates to public, comments from public on candidates' posts, candidates' replies for public comments, and lastly public replies to candidate comments on public comments. To assist readers to understand the types of data gathered, below is images taken from candidates' Instagram accounts which include each type of data.

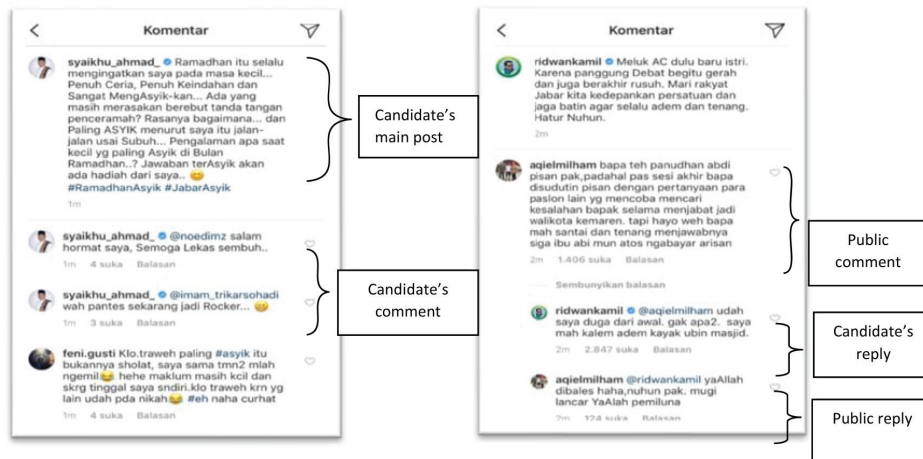


Figure 2 Images From Deputy Governor Candidate #3 Ahmad Syaikhul's and Governor Candidate #1 Ridwan Kamil's Instagram Counts

The images above feature the conversations between the candidates and the public in response to candidates' posts containing particular campaign messages on various popular issues. As illustrated by the examples above, a conversation will be usually initiated by candidates' post which then will attract responses from voters. The voters, then, often respond to the posts by leaving comments. If the candidate perceive a particular comment as interesting, the candidate often leaves a reply for the public in the reply column. This often ends in a reciprocal conversation consisting of comments, where public and candidates replying to one another's comments. The type of conversation in Instagram is called 'thread messages' (Instagram, 2018). Figure 3 is the general trends of candidates' engagement with the public in the forms of posts, comments, and replies.

The above trends were based on data taken during particular major events in campaign period, specifically on a day before the event, on the

day of the event day, and one day after the event. The trends are used to see if there are any differences among candidates in their engagement with voters on Instagram. The trends also indicates public interest in engaging themselves in conversations that were either initiated by the candidates or initiated by the public on candidates' Instagram account.

Figure 2 depicts the trends of candidates' engagement with the public in the forms of candidates' replies to public comments on their campaign messages embedded on their posts. Based on figure 2, candidates' engagement with public was the highest during the candidates registration period, illustrated by numerous public comments left on the candidates' accounts. Particularly, when governor candidates announced their respective running mate in the gubernatorial election, public left considerable number of comments on the candidates' account.

During the second major event, namely the

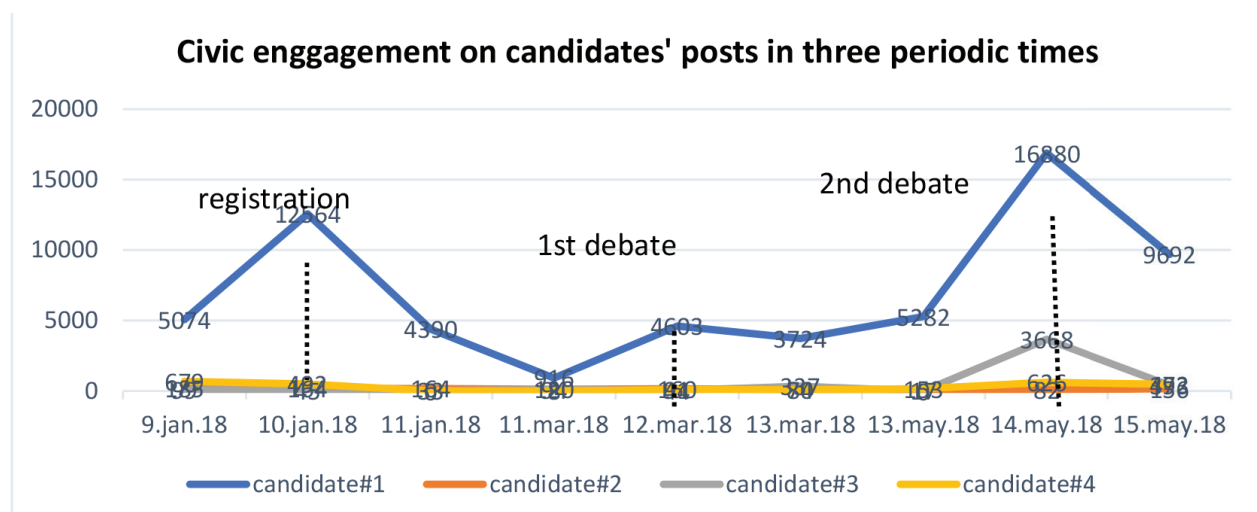


Figure 3. Trends of Candidates' Engagement with Public over a Period of Time

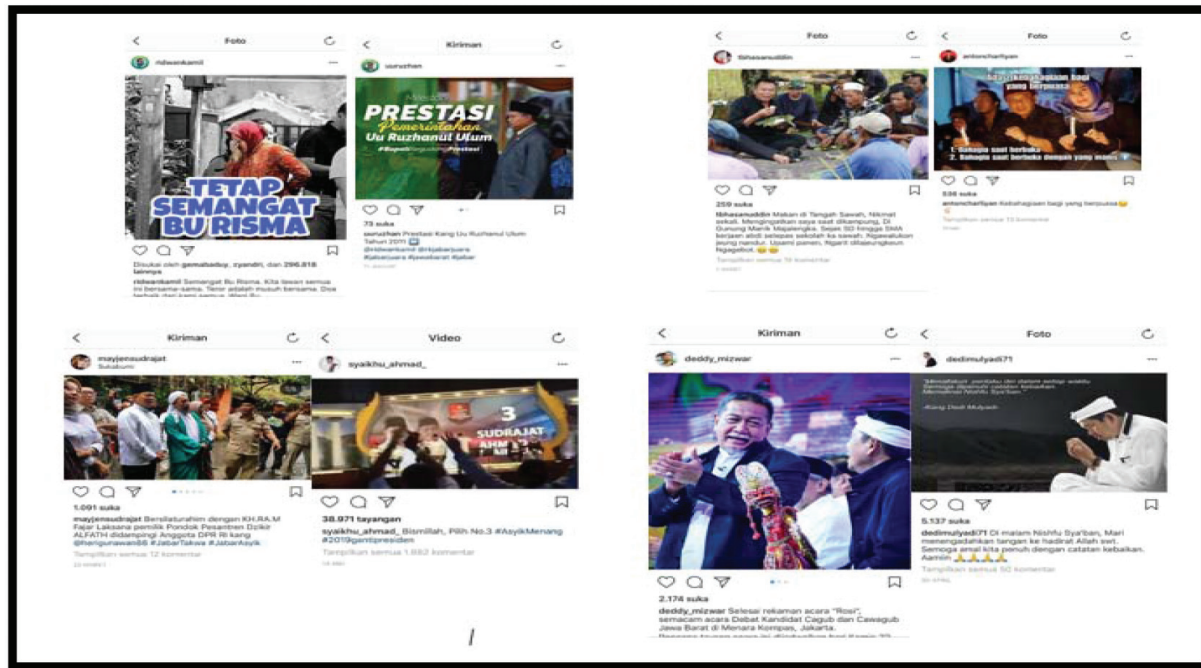


Figure 4. Example of Message Construction and Personal Brand Conducted by Candidates (source: Instagram accounts @ridwankamil, @uuzuzhan, @tbhasanuddin, @antoncharliyan, @mayjensudrajat, @syakhu_ahmad_, @daddy_mizwar, @dedimulyadi71)

first round of public debate, there was a decrease in engagement, as illustrated by the lesser number of comments left by the public on the candidates' accounts. Regardless, the engagement increased again during the second round of public debate. The second round public debate's greater popularity compared to the first rounds' might be due to the public perception which saw the second debate as the 'final war' of the candidates in winning public votes. Usually at the stage of final war, candidates employ all necessary means, including personal attacks on challengers, in order to smear other candidates' image or to convince other candidates' supporters to switch side.

In constructing campaign messages, each candidate often employed distinct means in forging personal brand that is appealing for the public. Below are examples of message constructions conducted by candidates during the registration period, the first round of public debate, and the second of public debate.

Based on figure 4, it can be seen how candidate Ridwan Kamil created an image of a young, educated figure through his posts and their captions which often raise popular issues such as terrorism. On the other hand, candidate Uu Ruzhanul Ulum created an image of a family man through his posts and their captions which often depict his contributions to the local community during his time as Tasikmalaya Regent. Meanwhile, candidate TB Hasanuddin who is less popular among public compared to other candidates created a populist image of an ordinary man through his posts, while his running mate Anton Charliyan, also not so popular among public, created an

image of a humorous and humanist figure imbued with his law enforcement background. Candidate for governor Sudrajat is still trying to introduce as a humanist and religious self-image. In the meantime, candidate Sudrajat and running mate Ahmad Syaikh, who were supported by Islamic party in the election, created an image of humanist and religious figures. Lastly, candidate Deddy Mizwar and running mate Dedi Mulyadi created an image of cultured figures, added with humanist and religious traits in the case of Deddy Mizwar.

Results

Table 1 illustrates the candidates' engagement with public on the candidates' Instagram accounts during three major events, namely the registration period, the first round of public debate, and the second round of public debate, throughout the campaign period. Based on the table, it can be concluded that as the campaign period commenced, the number of candidates' posts increased. Furthermore, during the last major event, not only the number of candidates' posts increased, their replies to public comments also increased, indicating a surge of candidates' engagement with the public as candidates became more active on their social media accounts. The table also shows an increase of the number of public comments nearing the final stage of the campaign period. An anomaly also occurred on the comment section initiated by a candidate, but it is suspected due to Instagram's system which categorizes the interactions among users on the comment section into thread messages according to the issues discussed (Instagram, 2018).

Table 1 Researchers' Calculations are Based on Engagement during Three Events

		1st Period (Registration)	2nd Period (1st Debate)	3rd Period (2nd Debate)
Ridwan Kamil & Uu Ruzhanul Ulum	Posts	8	8	9
	Public comments	22028	9243	31854
	Candidates' comment	0	0	0
	Public replies	169	223	6005
	Candidates' replies	4	7	23
TB Hasanuddin & Anton Charliyan	Posts	10	18	8
	Public comments	513	354	255
	Candidates' comment	0	0	0
	Public replies	0	0	2
	Candidates' replies	3	0	24
Sudrajat & Ahmad Syaikh	Posts	7	8	8
	Public comments	177	475	4061
	Candidates' comment	1	0	0
	Public replies	1	7	1547
	Candidates' replies	0	0	10
Deddy Mizwar & Dedi Mulyadi	Posts	9	3	8
	Public comments	1171	179	1251
	Candidates' comment	0	0	0
	Public replies	3	11	610
	Candidates' reply	0	0	0

Table 1 depicts an increase in every candidates' engagement with the public during the second round of public debate. In addition to an increase in the number of public comments, there was also an increase in the number of candidates' replies, which is suspected to attract more public engagement on the issues being discussed. Candidate Ridwan Kamil and running mate Uu Ruzhanul Ulum experienced an increase of 244% in the number of public comments left on their posts, successfully attracting a 27-fold public en-

gagement compared to the first debate. Likewise, candidate TB Hasanuddin and running mate Anton Charliyan were also able to attract more public engagement on their posts, which might have been due to the increase of candidates' replies as well. Candidate Sudrajat and running mate Ahmad Syaikh experienced the highest increase in public engagement, receiving as much as 225 times more public comments during the second round of public debate compared with the comments they received during the first debate.

This might have been by the candidates' blatant support for controversial anti-Jokowi movement announced prior to the second debate. The candidates' announcement was responded both positively and negatively by public, increasing the number of public engagement on the candidates' Instagram accounts. Lastly, candidate Deddy Mizwar and running mate Dedi Mulyadi also experienced a surge of public engagement on their accounts, receiving as much as 55 times more public comments compared with the comments they received during the previous debate.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that the candidates have positioned, introduced, and promoted themselves and campaign their political aspirations as well on social media. Otherwise, the candidates who already have value self-image and in the period of care and maintain the values which have not been disturbed or searched by his fault slit by others. These are the message which candidates attempt to construct. Based on the trends of candidates' engagement with the public, it appears that the candidates have yet to completely realize the significance of their engagement with public on social media in increasing public knowledge and participation in politics.

In addition to increasing public knowledge and participation in politics, another thing that can be highlighted from candidates' activities on social media is the way they constructed and delivered the message itself. Choosing the right message, especially nearing the end of the campaign period, is crucial. The period was used by the candidates to attract public engagement by raising national issues such as terrorism. The selection of issues and the construction of campaign messages can enhance the candidates' image as a sympathetic and perceptive figure, two traits that are found attractive in political candidates. As stated by Dan Pfeifer (2018), one of Barack Obama's communication experts in the president's election campaigns, who quoted the words of a famous American rap singer Jay-Z, "I'm not a businessman, I'm a business, man. You're not the message man, you're the message, man." (Pfeifer, 2018)

All things considered, further research still needs to be conducted on candidate number two's and candidate number four's activities on their Instagram accounts. Candidate number two's failure to amass as much as public engagement received by candidate number one and candidate number three needs to be further analyzed. On the other hand, candidate number four who conducted minimum interaction with public on their Instagram account during the second round of public debate but yet still managed to receive positive responses from public needs to be further analyzed as well. This is because assuming that the researchers' hypothesis is correct, that an increase in public engagement will result in an increase in public participation as well, candidate number four should have experienced a decrease,

not an increase, in public responses.

The researchers assume that there are other elements that influence the public to interact with their preferred candidates and ultimately to participate in elections. The researchers' assumption was based on the researchers' observation on how candidates construct their campaign messages in their Instagram posts and their effects. This is understandable because in each post, there is always an increase or a decrease in either the number of comments, replies, likes, or shares of the public.

The availability of social media platforms with specific structural and functional features have provided internet users with the opportunities of political and civic engagement outside the realm of traditional means often adopted by politicians in launching their campaigns (Vincent Raynaulda, 2016). This indicates that there is an interest among voters on certain issues. In regard to public discussion, exploring certain topics in the mass media is often affiliated with the concept of information bubble stated in Eli Pariser's book entitled "The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You" (2011).

Recent research has analyzed how social networks acted as echo chambers (Bakshy, 2015). Following this finding, the construction campaign message, thus, should influence the voters' decision on whether to get involved in politics or not. However, since at the time of writing West Java Gubernatorial election has yet to announce its winner, a comprehensive analysis on how public engagement can increase public participation in politics cannot be done. Future research is needed to answer this matter.

Conclusion

This research highlights the important role of social media as a political tool. The period of the fourth political era must be realized and accepted by the politicians as a necessity in Indonesia. In the current era, social media such as Instagram is not just merely a communication tool, but also a political tool which can be employed by candidates to encourage public engagement with voters. By employing social media as a political tool, candidates can create and promote their personal brand on social media platforms such as Instagram, which was specifically designed to promote one's image (Marcus, 2015). Social media can be used as well as a platform for candidates and voters to exchange opinions and thoughts in an attempt to increase public political knowledge.

The case discussed in this research is the political contest during West Java Gubernatorial election in Indonesia. West Java, as one of the most politically significant regions in Indonesia due to its large number of population, can measure politicians' success in securing votes. Additionally, West Java is also considered as potential area in which the hypermedia political strategy can be implemented due to the high rate of internet pen-

etration and large number of internet users in the region (Sari, 2017). This research analyzes West Java governor and deputy governor' Instagram accounts in order to understand how candidates' social media presence can increase public political participation. However, since the research was conducted during the campaign period and the winner of the election has yet to be determined, a thorough analysis on how candidates' Instagram posts and the public responses they received affected the election outcomes. Data collection only conducted during three major events throughout the campaign period, namely the candidates registration period, the first round of public debate, and the second round of public debate, during which candidates' engagement with the public is expected to be more intense.

This study finds that not all candidates are aware of the benefits of public engagement with voters on their Instagram accounts. The general trend indicates that overall, candidates increased their engagement with voters during the three major events, yet candidate number four did not do so. This can be expected coming from the construction of messages and come up with popular national issues such as terrorism or the death of cultural figures.

In regard to candidates number three, it can be concluded that their engagement with public of-

ten surrounded controversial issues, such as their public announcement about their support for the controversial anti-Jokowi movement. Such strategy was able to attract more public responses, illustrated by an increase in public comments left on their Instagram account following their announcement. The preferred strategy of candidate number three indicates what kind of political strategy that they may employ in the future. Further research is needed once the election is over to prove validity of this hypothesis and the finding.

Additionally, since candidates number four still managed to attract many public responses despite the absence of engagement between the candidates and the public, the researchers assume that there are other factors which increase public response on candidates' Instagram accounts that still need to be discovered. Such assumption is further supported by the case of candidates number two, who despite their active engagement with the public still received significantly lesser public responses compared to the responses received by candidates number one and candidates number three. The researchers argued that the construction of campaign messages that are appealing for voters is the main factor in increasing public response on candidates' Instagram account, yet the cases of candidates number four and number two prove that further research is still needed.

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